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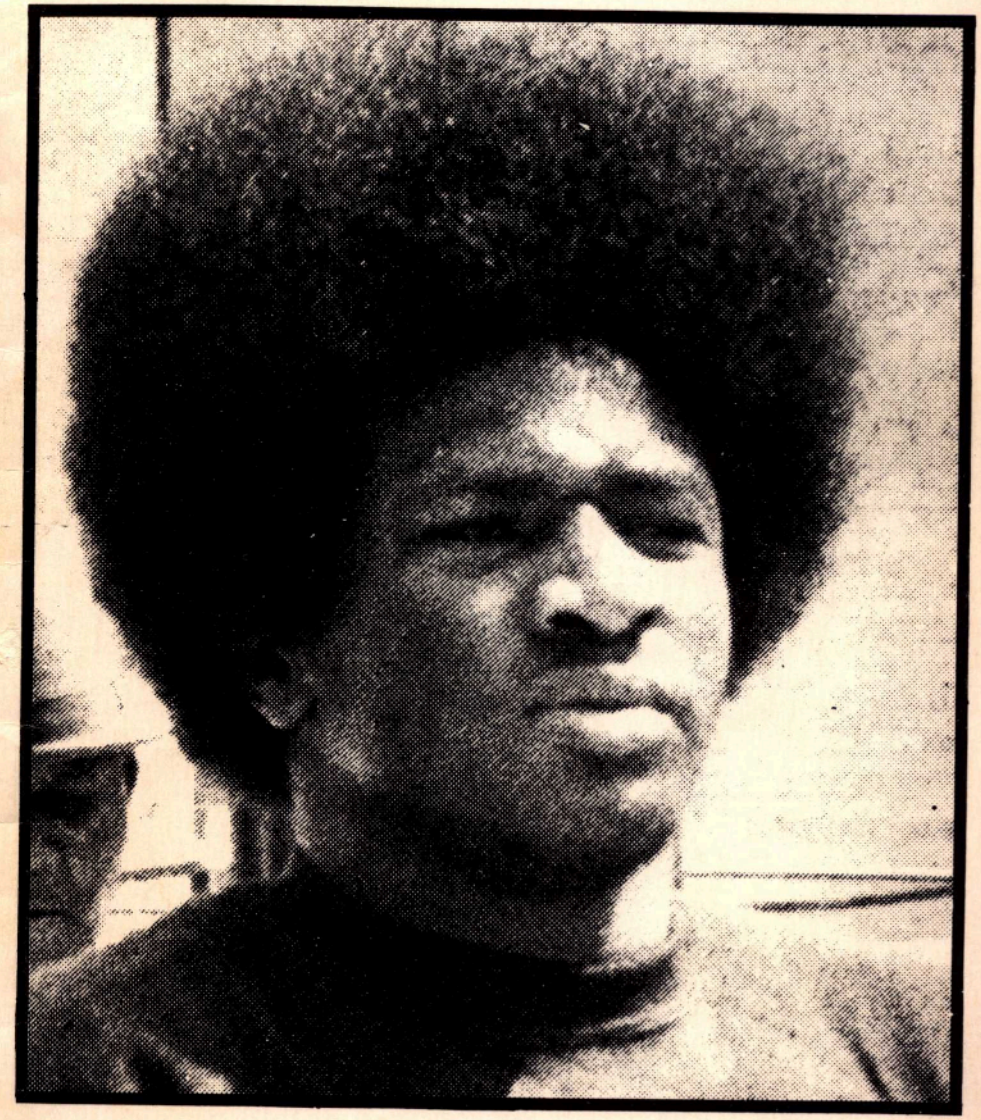
THE STRUGGLE TO FREE GARY TYLER



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THE STRUGGLE TO FREE GARY TYLER

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Multi-national unity, such as above in Hartford, Conn., demonstration, is key in struggles like the Free Gary Tyler movement.

Support for Tyler's struggle has come from many countries like the demonstration below of the Third World Support Committee in Norway.

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FREE GARY TYLER

By Paul Hintz

We've seen the crosses burning from Boston to L.A.
We've heard the mobs are marching almost every day.
It's time we gave an answer to their courts and to their Klan
As they frame a legal lynching of another young Black man.

The courthouse flag waves law and order above the red blood-stained land.
It has stripes as white as the cotton picked by shackled hands.
The blue sky of the rich condemned the rest of us to dust,
The stars can't count our martyrs, but tomorrow belongs to us!

New Orleans has a monument to the cause of death and hate.
Paid for by the bankers and protected by the state.
But all their walls are weakening, can't you hear the sound?
Now's the time to tear them down!

Our struggles have known heroes of every color skin,
Women and men whose courage shows us the way to win.
Today we give their answer to the masters of this land,
We will crush the court's foundations as we fight for this demand!

Free Gary Tyler, free Gary Tyler! Death to the Klan!

For we've seen the crosses burning from Boston to L.A.
We've heard the mobs are marching almost every day.
Today they get an answer they'd better understand:
There will be no more lynchings in this land!

Free Gary Tyler, free Gary Tyler! Death to the Klan!

BALLAD OF GARY TYLER

By the Call Singers
Sung to the tune of "Hurricane Carter"

Gary Tyler and his friends rode a bus to school one day
They faced the stones of a racist mob
A shot rang out and a white boy fell dead
The Black kids knew there'd be hell to pay

Here comes the story of oppression
Not just of one man but a whole nation
The Black nation must be free
Labor in a white skin never can be free
When labor in a Black skin wears a brand

That week the cops had never shown their face
While the Klan ranted and the hate grew thick
When that boy was shot, the cops were all around
For two hours straight they made the Blacks kneel on the ground

Gary is a young man who hates tyranny
A Black who thinks Black people need equality
He spoke up when a cop put a gun to his friend's head
Now that's the kind of man the ruling class wants dead

They charged Gary Tyler with murder first degree
The crime was seeking freedom in the "Land of the Free"
The all-white jury didn't take long to decide
In just two hours came the verdict: "He must die."

Now Gary Tyler's supposed to get the chair
The judge has said "His trial was fair."
People everywhere know that's a lie
We'll never let young Gary die!

Now Gary's story is not the only one
Many more will suffer before the struggle's done
But now the working people are taking up the call
And the revolution's coming that will free us all

Here comes the story of resistance
Not just of one man but a whole nation
The workers' struggle will unite
With the Black struggle in one mighty fight
And end in victory!

Introduction

Gary Tyler is a young Black who has spent the last three of his nineteen years behind bars, framed for a murder he didn't commit. Originally sentenced to death, Tyler was resentenced in March 1977 to life in prison. The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear his case and the Louisiana authorities have refused every attempt for a new trial. Tyler won't be eligible for parole for *20 years!*

In the last three years, a mass movement has grown up in reponse to this racist frame-up. "Free Gary Tyler" has become a rallying cry across the country and the world, a concrete expression of resistance to imperialism's system of national oppression. Support has come from as far as Canada, Latin America, Europe and Africa. In the U.S., some 100,000 people have signed petitions to free Tyler and rallies have been held in over 30 cities, the largest being the Southwide demonstration (2,000 strong) in New Orleans in July 1976.

In the face of the legal railroading Tyler has received, the defense movement has remained strong and united —— refusing to rely on the capitalists' courts. As Gary Tyler told *The Call* when his most recent appeal was denied last October: "I have no faith in the judicial system. I want everybody to know that I believe that only the people will free me."

STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE

These sentiments have been echoed by Mrs. Juanita Tyler, Tyler's mother, and other members of the People's Defense Coalition to Free Gary Tyler and Fight Injustice (PDC). PDC Chairman Kalamu ya Salaam stated on learning that the Supreme Court had refused to hear the case last January: "Struggle is the only law of the land. No struggle...no victory.... We will win and Gary Tyler will be free!"

Centered in the small Louisiana town of Destrehan, a former plantation manor, the struggle to free Tyler has been a school for war. Thousands are learning about the root causes of discrimination and are coming to see the final road for liberation of Black people as well as the entire working class.

What is becoming clear to many is that Gary Tyler's frame-up is not a "distortion" of justice but the reality of American justice and democracy. The segregation of the schools, which has touched off massive struggles in cities from Boston to Los Angeles is not an accident. These present-day battles are but a continuation of the rebellion of the first slaves against their master's lash.

The U.S. is actually a prisonhouse of nations. As the late Mao Tsetung, leader of the Chinese people, put it, **"U.S. imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people."** ("Statement Supporting the Afro-Americans in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," 1963).

Within this country's boundaries, some 25 million Black people, over 17 million Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and other Latinos, as well as several million Asian and Native American people suffer the most brutal discrimination and denial of basic rights.

The Black Belt South is the historical homeland of Afro-Americans, a crescent of common territory stretching from the shores of Maryland southward through Georgia and westward to Texas. It is here that Afro-Americans developed as a distinct people out of diverse African tribes. It is here that different classes of Blacks developed and established the interconnections of a common economic life. It is here, in the midst of centuries of repression and resistance that Afro-Americans acquired a common language and common culture. And finally, it is here that the Black people will exercise their right of self-determination, establishing a political power that will root out capitalism and the plantation system once and for all.

WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT AGAINST IMPERIALISM

The Black liberation struggle is a component part of the worldwide struggle of the oppressed nations against imperialism. Imperialism is the rule of a small handful of big corporation owners and is based on the exploitation of the working class. In order to maintain and expand their profits, these monopoly capitalists exercise a dictatorship, but not only against their "own" workers. They plunder and subjugate whole nations around the globe, dividing the world into a handful of "great" oppressor nations and a multitude of oppressed nations. What is more, these imperialist powers engage in fierce rivalry among themselves, and periodically redivide the globe through imperialist wars.

To wage these wars, however, the imperialists must stir up national chauvinism, aimed at splitting the working class and fanning hatred between peoples of different nationalities. To wage war, they must first attack the people at home. It is in this sense that the case of Gary Tyler and the struggle to free him is not simply a "domestic" issue. It is a cause for the working class in establishing a firm alliance with the minority nationalities, so as to be able to defeat imperialism and its policies of war and fascist repression.

Today there are two imperialist superpowers who are the biggest international exploiters and oppressors, the United States and the Soviet Union. They are locked in a battle to redivide the world, to conquer new territories and to hold onto existing ones. This is inevitably leading to a new world war.

The Soviet Union was once a socialist country and a shining example of equality among nationalities. But in the 1950s, it was taken over by a handful of capitalists who smashed the rule of the working class and re-established the

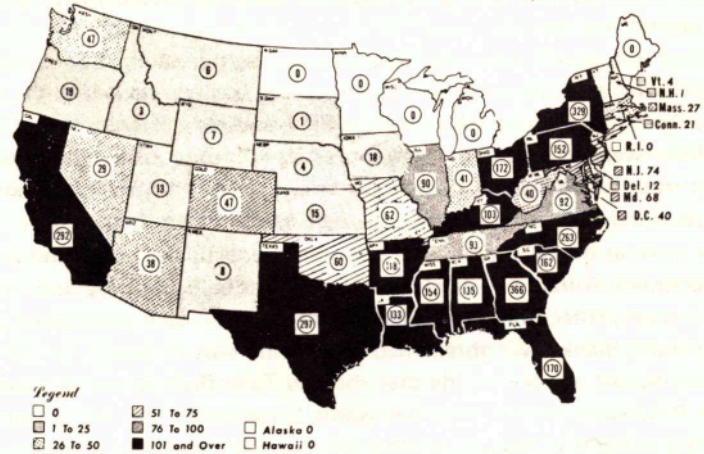
"prison of nations" known under the Czars. Today it murders or confines to "mental hospitals" those who, like Gary Tyler, stand up in protest against exploitation and national oppression.

But imperialism will not last long. The workers' movements, the Gary Tyler movement, the freedom fighters in Southern Africa, the powerful struggle of the third world and many more —— all these are forming a torrent that is bound to triumph.

The Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) has produced this pamphlet to aid in building the movement to free Gary Tyler and to advance a revolutionary understanding of the Black freedom struggle in general. It insists that Gary Tyler will only win freedom through building a movement that wholeheartedly relies on the people, especially on the unity of the workers and the oppressed nationalities. This line stands in sharp contrast to the legalism and reformism spread by some of the revisionists and Trotskyites who have tried to make a quick political fortune off the case.

The Free Gary Tyler movement is made up of people from many different occupations, religious beliefs and political viewpoints. It includes communists, who work to give it leadership and guidance. Many people have never met communists or seen them in action. Others are not clear about what principles communists uphold. It is hoped that this pamphlet will answer many of these questions and further our common cause.

PRISONERS EXECUTED UNDER CIVIL AUTHORITY IN THE UNITED STATES, 1930-1970. BY STATES



Map shows the South leads in the number of "legal" lynchings.

1. The System of Legal Lynching

The system of lynch terror in the United States, particularly in the Deep South, is not confined to night-rider vigilantes of the Ku Klux Klan, although such lynchings are not uncommon occurrences even today. "Legal" lynchings, as with Gary Tyler, are also utilized by those in power. The imperialists enforce the subjugation of the Afro-American people through state power. They have at their disposal the police, National Guard and U.S. Army, as well as the courts and legal system.

Through its myth of democracy or through fascist terror, the state maintains the dictatorship of the huge monopoly corporations, banks and the modern-day plantation owners in the "New South" and the country as a whole.

In 1974, Gary Tyler was 16. He was a student at the high school in Destrehan, a small town about 40 miles north of New Orleans. Only a few years before, there had been two separate school systems there, one for whites and one for Blacks. In the first days of October 1974, fighting had occurred between white and Black students. On October 7, Gary Tyler and other Black students were loaded on a bus for the trip home from school. A racist mob attacked the bus. Several Black students reported seeing guns among the adults in the mob. A shot rang out. Fourteen-year-old Timothy Weber, a white student, was dead.

None of the members of the mob was searched, arrested or even questioned. A Black scapegoat was in order. Tyler, who had protested against police abuse during the search of the Black students, was arrested. It was only later that night that his charge was changed from "interfering with the law" to first degree murder.

No gun was found when the bus was thoroughly searched on the school grounds. Only later was one "found" while the bus was parked at the police station. The driver of the school bus, a 20-year Army veteran, stated that a .45 calibre weapon could not have been fired from inside the school bus without his having heard it. The autopsy report on Weber provided no evidence of the calibre of the bullet or the angle at which it entered.

That night at the St. Charles Parish (county) courthouse, other things were also happening. A frame-up case against Tyler was being built by both the police and state prosecutors. The Black students were each questioned separately. Natalie Blanks was threatened with being sent to prison for 99 years unless she signed a paper saying that she saw Tyler fire the gun. She was also told by Prosecutor Hymel that her young baby would be taken away from her for good. Loretta Thomas, another Black student, received similar threats.

In the days that followed the shooting, David Duke of the Ku Klux Klan flew to Destrehan from Boston, where he had been leading anti-busing protests. An atmosphere of lynch-terror was whipped up by parish officials and their press. The Klan proclaimed that it was shutting down the streets of Destrehan in order to "protect white citizens." Those whites who were witnesses to the shooting were undoubtedly intimidated. The message was clear. From that time on, the verdict against Gary Tyler was already in.

CONSPIRACY TO FRAME TYLER

All the facts in this case prove that there is a well-constructed conspiracy to frame Tyler. Sentenced by an all-white jury, without proper legal counsel, he was sent to death row to be executed in May 1976. (This sentence was later changed to life in prison after a Supreme Court ruling outlawed Louisiana's death penalty law.)

At Tyler's original trial, the state's key witness, Natalie Blanks, answered questions by reading from a paper taped inside the witness stand by the state prosecutors. Two years later a motion for a new trial was denied, although Natalie Blanks exposed the prosecutor's coercion and retracted her original testimony. Judge Ruche Marino, who had originally heard the case and had himself withheld important evidence from the jury, stated in April 1976 that there were "no grounds" to grant a new trial. In January 1977, the Supreme Court refused to hear the Tyler appeal.

This brought the case back to Judge Marino's court for appeal on new grounds—that racist methods were used to convict Tyler. In particular, Tyler

charged that his original lawyer was incompetent. On October 28, 1977, this appeal was also denied.

Since slavery times, such justice has been practiced by the state in towns like Destrehan across the Black Belt. Its function is to preserve existing class relations, first of slave to master, then of sharecropper to landlord, now also of worker to boss. Sometimes state power is used to make an example out of a single Black victim, like Gary Tyler. Sometimes state power is used to break a strike or run a union organizer out of town. When necessary, its full wrath is unleashed upon the entire Black community as it was during the civil rights protests. Everyday harassment and oppression by the state is the rule. As often as possible, the stamp of legal justice is put on such activities by the courts, as with Gary Tyler's case.

The situation facing Gary Tyler is far from being a miscarriage of justice or an exception. It is imperialist democracy in action. And what is true in Destrehan is true in Baton Rouge and Washington, D.C. Although the American people have a choice every four years of electing one or another representative of the rich, democracy is enjoyed only by a handful in the ruling financial circles of this country. For the majority, the ruling class practices a ruthless dictatorship. It is this which preserves wage-slavery and exploitation of the working class. And it is this same dictatorship that enslaves a whole nation of Black people within the borders of the world's foremost bourgeois democracy.

LEGAL SYSTEM TOOL OF CLASS RULE

Various liberal politicans and labor bureaucrats all advocate that oppressed people should seek changes through the American "constitutional" channels. These misleaders purposely cover up the fact that the U.S. Constitution and the many volumes of laws in this country were written expressly to maintain the status quo. It is a system of laws under which an unemployed worker can be put away for years because he steals a loaf of bread to feed his hungry family —— but where it is perfectly legal to exploit and rob millions of dollars from the labor of working people. It is a system of laws where the mere accusation of rape by a Black man of a white woman can bring the death sentence and where it is perfectly legal for the U.S. government to kill millions in Vietnam.

The laws and legal institutions of this country, tools of the class in power, have always been used to maintain the oppression of the Afro-American people as well as other minorities and working people. The slave trade, a multi-million dollar business at the time of the American Revolution, was perfectly legal. The U.S. Constitution, which supposedly promised equality of rights, did not apply to one-fifth of the nation's population. In fact, a Southern planter could exercise one vote for every three-fifths of a Black slave he

owned. Each Southern state had its own laws which bound a slave to his master. There was no law against the rape of a Black woman by a white man!

Later, after slavery was formally abolished, a Black man who was found away from "his" plantation could be put in jail under "vagrancy" laws. If a sharecropper didn't fulfill his debt to the landlord, the county sheriff could always find some law to have him sentenced to the chain gang. For nearly a hundred years, Louisiana's Angola Prison was a great source of cheap, mostly Black labor as a sugar plantation itself.

For those who believe that things have changed or that justice in this country is impartial, we should briefly look at the facts. Out of a total of 3,859 people executed since 1930 —— 2,066 were Black. Although most rapes are committed by whites, 405 of the 455 persons put to death for rape have been Black. Most of those who received the death penalty were in the South.

The current laws and legal system have really changed little since the days of slavery, nor could they. It is this imperialist legal system which changed Gary Tyler from a student in Destrehan to a prisoner in Angola Prison. To put our hope for his freedom in such a court system would be like signing his death warrant.

Prisoners pick cotton on a prison-plantation, source of cheap labor.

2. Black Education: Shadow of the Plantation

"Now look at the situation in Boston. Every day Black children are attacked in some form as they ride school buses and their lives are in constant danger.... I had a right to the education I was trying to obtain, and no one had the right to stop me from trying to receive that education...." Gary Tyler

It has been nearly twenty years since the first handful of Black students courageously walked up the steps of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. This drama brought to public attention the existence of separate or segregated school systems in the South. Several years before, the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that "separate could *not* be equal." Some reformist-minded leaders of the civil rights movement, placing their faith in such decisions, heralded a new era for Afro-Americans. A few leaders even raised the slogan "Free by '63!"

In recent years, the ruling class has made clear its intention to stop the process of school integration through either a court case or legislation. The U.S. government has been forced to admit that segregation has actually increased. The education received by the Black population, particularly in the South, remains inferior. It is no wonder then that the illiteracy rate among Blacks is three times higher than that among whites.

Even the few meager gains made by the Black Revolt of the 1960s are under sharp attack. There have been severe cutbacks in Black studies programs, and Black and Latino junior colleges have been threatened with having to shut down. The recent Bakke decision in California, which alleges that whites face "reverse discrimination" in getting into college, is setting a precedent for attacking special admission programs in schools across the country.

CAPITALISTS CONTROL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The lesson to be learned is that the quality and type of education afforded the poor, working and minority peoples under this system is completely bound up with the interests of the rich —— and on what type of labor force they need at any particular time.

It should not be surprising to see that the shadow of the plantation hangs over the schools of this country. Over 113 years ago, Louisiana law prohibited slaves from reading, writing or receiving any education. It was a crime punishable by death. Plantation masters presumed that a slave who could read and write would be even more rebellious than his fellow bondsmen. Slaves might read newspapers and learn of such events as the revolution in Haiti or of other uprisings. Through a newspaper, the slaves might learn who was getting ready to be sold and thus run away on the

underground railroad. All of this struck terror into the hearts of the slaveocracy, whose wealth was dependent upon Black slave labor.

With the defeat of the slave owners in the Civil War, new Reconstruction governments were set up throughout the South, including Louisiana. These governments, made up of newly emancipated slaves, former freedmen and poor whites, began a system of free, public education for the first time in the South. This free education not only included Black people but the mass of poor whites who had previously been excluded from education due to its expense.

But the slave owners were not reconciled to their defeat and these schools were under constant attack by reactionaries. In Louisiana, schools were often burned to the ground, teachers lynched or run out of the state.

In 1877, a new alliance was cemented between the northern imperialist financial interests and the Southern planter class, culminating in a reign of KKK terror, the disbanding of the Union Leagues (a form of people's militias), and the withdrawal of federal troops from the South.

Money for education in Louisiana was severely cut back. The average length of the common school term fell off about 20%. The amount of money spent per pupil in 1890 in Louisiana fell off by 59% of what it had been. In

Black children are still forced to go to segregated schools like the one above.

1880, money spent per pupil was only 44% of the national average. Thirteen years after Reconstruction, a Louisiana newspaper complained that "there is an illiterate majority today, whereas there was none in 1880, that this illiteracy prevails not among Negroes alone, but among the whites as well."

Southern Congressmen in Washington, toward the end of the century, voted against a bill which would have allotted the South special money to combat illiteracy. One observer commented that he couldn't "help from suspecting that race-prejudice in the South and a fear that education of the Negroes would make them less easily manipulated in elections had more influence in the adverse action than any constitutional scruples."

The betrayal of Reconstruction by the imperialists left the former Black majority plantation areas changed only in form from the days of chattel slavery. Sharecropping and other forms of peonage became the dominant relations in agriculture, and Black people were tied to the land by law, terror and debt.

Another tool with which to maintain segregation and the plantation system was the denial of education. One Southern state after another adopted "Jim Crow" laws setting up separate schools even in the smallest towns. Here Black schools received sometimes half the amount of money of white schools and Black teachers' salaries were also much lower.

In St. Charles Parish, no high school facility was available to Black students until 1948. The total spent by all the Black Southern colleges in the 1930s was less than the budget for Harvard University alone, an institution run for the sons of the imperialists.

SCHOOLING DISCOURAGED FOR BLACK SHARECROPPERS

Black sharecroppers were discouraged from school attendance by their landlords, as most reasoned that a field laborer who could read or write would be more likely to challenge the debts or "figurings" at the end of the year. Under the constant burden of debt, the field worker often had no money for shoes or decent clothes when it came time for school to open. Until the later 1960s, school terms in many Deep South states were considerably shorter for Blacks than the school terms for whites. The school year largely revolved around the cotton or other crops, openly encouraging child labor in the fields.

As one Black woman in Louisiana's cane country put it, "School teacher put me in the fields when I was 6. She stopped me in the second grade...I don't learn no reading. I can count but it may be right and it may be wrong."

Now industry is playing a more and more important role in Louisiana's economy -- but the ruling class has not lost its need for a cheap labor force. While factory work sometimes requires the rudiments of an education, Louisiana benefits from the large pool of Black and white unemployed and

low-wage agricultural workers. Black youths like Gary Tyler face an unemployment rate close to 50% - 60%. These facts certainly show why there is such resistance by the imperialists to changes in education.

The struggle for a right to decent education by Black people has always been linked to rights in every field and ultimately to the question of political power. Real integration of the schools, just as every aspect of social life, can take place fully only on the basis of democracy and equality between nations.

Today, most of Louisiana's Black students do not attend integrated schools. In places where integration has taken place, Black students have faced discriminatory suspensions and the dismissal of Black teachers and staff. Even certain concessions won in the last decade, such as Black studies programs and special grants for minority and poor students, are under mounting attack by the ruling class and appear to be short-lived gains.

With this background, the incident at Destrehan High School in October 1974 comes into focus. It is bound up not only with the battles going on against segregation from Boston to Louisville but also with the struggle for complete emancipation of the Afro-American people and all workers.

3. A Look Into the 'New South'

The necessity for poor education and tight political control by the ruling class in towns like Destrehan becomes even clearer when we look at who controls the economy of Louisiana, which is typical of most Deep South states.

Whether carried out by men in white robes of the KKK or in the black robes of judges like Ruche Marino, lynchings are but one means of preserving the billions in profits which roll in every year from the continued national oppression of Blacks in the South. It is no accident that the South also maintains the worst conditions for labor -- of every nationality -- of any place in the country.

"We feel Louisiana is a good place to consider for your next plant location," says Governor Edwin Edwards of Louisiana. "Beyond statistics is an important intangible: the attitude of the people and the government of Louisiana. And I think that this, too, will impress you."

Obviously, the financial oligarchy of the country agrees, as Louisiana ranks among the top 15 states in capital expansion over the last 20 years. One hundred and fifty of the largest 500 monopoly corporations in the U.S. have operations in Louisiana. This includes the Exxon plant, which is one of the world's four largest oil refineries. During the last two decades more than $10 billion has been invested in manufacturing in the state by the big imperialists.

"Basically, Louisiana has a favorable business climate -- we call it the

'Right-To-Profit' attitude," says the Louisiana Department of Industry and Commerce. The "intangible" advantages, of which Gov. Edwards spoke, are actually very real.

The ruling class "legal system" is used to promote and protect the huge corporate fortunes of the capitalist parasites. The state brags that only 9% of its revenues come from industry, meaning that the working people there are soaked for millions. Federal income taxes are deductible from state taxes. There is no state property tax and local parish taxes can be waived for up to ten years -- for manufacturing plants.

Huge federal subsidies also supplement these enormous profits made by the oil barons, the shipping magnates as well as the state's plantation owners.

But local ruling circles are quick to point out that Louisiana's *greatest natural resource is its labor force.* It is this nearly million and a half workers who, with their daily sweat and blood, produce immense wealth for a few. The median family income in Louisiana is $8,854 for whites and $4,002 for Black families. The state ranks below 26 others in wages.

Louisiana's modern slave-drivers boast that the state's workers are nearly 30% "more productive" than the U.S. average and have a work-stoppage (strike) rate which is 40% below that of the national. State officials are quick to point to the large "trainable" workforce, meaning the large pool of people being run off the land and those unemployed in the big cities like New Orleans.

'RIGHT-TO-WORK' LAW PASSED

The Avondale shipyard is the largest non-union shipbuilding enterprise in the country, employing over 10,000 workers under bad conditions. Although once a stronghold for organized labor before the turn of the century, New Orleans businessmen are happy that the city's union membership now runs only about 20%.

In order to remain competitive with other Southern states, Louisiana recently passed a new "Right-to-Work" law, which outlaws union shops. Its passage followed an expensive press and TV campaign by rich Louisiana businessmen who predicted "doom" for the state's economy and a loss of jobs if the bill was not passed.

Politicans and those in the government bureaucracy have kept their word when they promised that "for many years we have been refining our laws in order to make Louisiana more attractive to industry."

Billions in profits are also preserved for the capitalists by the top union officials. While posing as "friends" of labor, these misleaders act as agents for the capitalists inside the workers' movement.

These labor misleaders have done their best to keep the South a region without unions. They have often written Southern wage differentials into union contracts. They have worked hand in glove with the big corporations

to sow white chauvinism and preserve discrimination against minorities.

In Louisville, Kentucky, these union bureaucrats have formed a group called "United Labor Against Busing," which includes many top local union officials. This group has opposed the right of Black school children to attend the white schools and has led several mob attacks on Black residents of the city. These same bureaucrats are conspicuously missing when it comes to leading demonstrations against the huge layoffs which hit Louisville!

In New Orleans, the labor misleaders of the International Longshormen's Union have preserved Jim Crow segregated locals, which have served to disarm the dockworkers in the face of the shipping magnates. These racist policies have meant that New Orleans, which was once a city of great labor solidarity, has become one of the worst examples for working conditions in the nation. Across the country, these top union officials have opposed unions supporting the movement to free Gary Tyler.

The working class must throw off such misleaders entirely. By taking a firm stand against discrimination, fighting to build unity among workers of all nationalities, and by overthrowing the rule of these labor aristocrats, the workers' movement will gain the necessary strength to topple this system.

As Gary Tyler pointed out in a letter from death row, *"Who are the perpetrators of racism? Is it the lower class whites? No!!! It is instead the high class whites who are the main factor... until we finally wake up to this, we will forever be in conflict with each other."*

Louisiana...the "Right to Profit" State, and what it offers your business or industry

Our Work Force, State Government...

Louisiana advertises its "Right-to-Profit" advantages for capitalists.

4. The Plantation System Lives On

While businessmen like to paint a picture of the bustling, up-to-date, urban "New South," they are acutely aware of why labor is so cheap and profit margins so high in the Southern states. It would not even be correct to say that this is a "legacy" of the plantation system. The fact is —— *the plantation system in Louisiana is alive and well.*

What is also well-known is that this plantation system is completely bound up with the servitude of Black labor. It was upon this labor —— first slave, then sharecropper, and now, mainly wage-labor —— that this "New South" was built.

While industry is growing in Louisiana, it still accounts for only 13.5% of the state's workforce. One-fourth of all manufacturing workers are connected with agriculture, in food processing or lumber. The main crops are cotton, soy, rice and sugar cane. St. Charles Parish was built on sugar cane, which is still its principal crop.

PLANTATION SYSTEM HAS GROWN TODAY

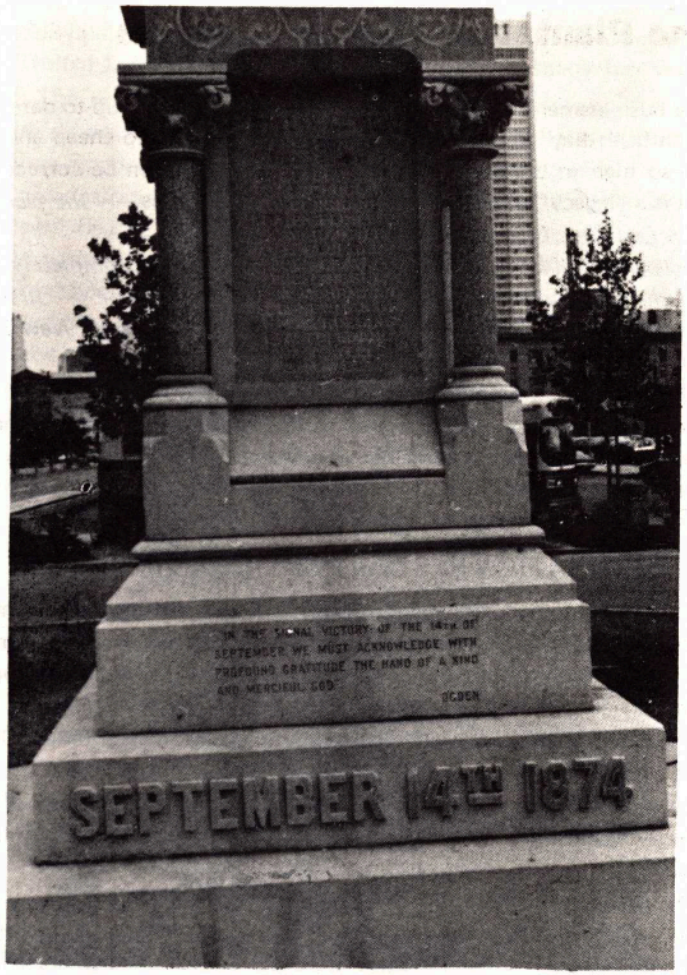
Far from fading out, the plantation system has actually grown and land has become concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer big growers. The number of farms in Louisiana harvesting over 1,000 acres of crops has quadrupled since 1950. The average farm size in 1930 was 57 acres. Today, more and more land has been bought up by giant corpoations, and the average is 231 acres.

The promise to slaves of land and freedom became empty phrases after the Civil War. Most Black people in Louisiana became sharecroppers or field laborers.

A few managed to acquire a bit of land. But even this has virtually vanished under the weight of the expanding plantation economy. For example, in St. Charles Parish, there were 32 Black land owners with 744 (total) acres of land in 1945. Today, of the 71 farms listed, *all* are owned by whites. St. Charles produced 1,595 acres of sugar cane last year. Large growers control all of this.

James D. Graugnard, President of Louisiana's Farm Bureau, Inc., stated that "Cane workers are not forced to work for a particular grower, nor are they forced to live in housing provided by him. This is still a free country. The individual charts his own path. If he cannot feed, clothe, and educate his family at his present job, there are others in the area..."

But the only freedom enjoyed in Louisiana's cane plantation areas is the *freedom to exploit*. Cane cutters, more than other farm workers, are chained to one plantation. They are in constant debt to the owners and barred from most local manufacturing plants, by agreement between growers and bosses.



New Orleans officials recently restored this monument to white supremacy.

Black cane workers in Louisiana make from $3,000 to $3,200 a year. In St. Charles Parish, not the worst in the state, 60% of all Black people live below the federal poverty level.

The stories told by the Black cane cutters themselves show the continuation of semi-feudal conditions in the Black Belt.

Huet Freeman, a plantation worker from an early age, netted $2,549 in 1973 for a year's work. Freeman put it this way: "We don't want to leave. We just want to be treated better. The money's not enough to look forward to. It's just enough to have the strength to go on the next time.

"The growers say by us not paying rent we're getting a fair and equal wage. But I don't think so. After a life-time of work, I don't see we profit anything...we don't even own the house."

Another Black cane cutter spoke about the struggle against starvation. "I get $1.95-an-hour during grinding (harvesting, ed.) —— that be from October to January —— and I make out, as far as it goes. But like I say, when the work's gone, it's gone and you just don't get nothing coming in." Out of the cane cutter's two-week paycheck, the grower deducts for gas and electricity. Water for the shack which has no indoor plumbing is provided "free."

Thus, the basis for Louisiana's generally cheap labor is directly traceable to the continued existence of Black peonage in agriculture. Some 85% of the country's most poverty-stricken counties are in the South, where Black people earn 45% of what their counterparts in the North earn.

Oftentimes, those who till the soil cannot even afford food stamps, because they rarely have enough cash on hand to buy them. Only with the confiscation of these plantations under socialism can these evils be eliminated and the people who have labored there for centuries enjoy the wealth they produce.

5. The Road to Political Power

A few years ago, the liberal business leaders of New Orleans went to great expense to restore an old monument to white supremacy in the hub of the city. The statue is a tribute to the attempt of the white slaveowners who tried to overthrow the Reconstruction government there.

Why go to the trouble of restoring this particular historic relic? The reason is relatively simple. Today, this monument stands as a shrine to the modern-day slave-drivers who hold political power in this country. It is a monument to imperialist democracy which exercises a dictatorship over the working class, oppressed nationalities and the more than 20 million Afro-American people. It is a statue to remind people *"who runs the show!"*

Just as the question of maintaining political power has always been uppermost in the minds of the ruling class —— so the quest for self-

determination and political power has been a constant theme running through the Afro-American people's struggle for freedom.

In the 1960s a mass rebellion of the Afro-American people spread nationwide. Beginning as a civil rights movement against Jim Crow, it later took on a nationalist character in the Black Power movement of the late 1960s. This Black upsurge struck panic in the ruling class.

The civil rights movement, starting in the mid-1950s, had created turmoil across the Deep South, from the smallest Black Belt towns to the big plantations and urban ghettoes. Its message of "Freedom Now!" and its demand for complete equality were heard not only at the lunch counters, bus stations and schools but extended into every sphere of life.

No sooner would a protest begin than the police or sheriff would be on hand to protect "law and order"—— "order" being the property of Woolworth or Greyhound, and "law" being clubs, water hoses, electric cattle prods, pistols, mass arrests and murder. When necessary, the Klan would be called to beef up the police force. When demonstrators called the federal government for protection, a note-taking "observer" was sent. Later it was revealed that many Klansmen were in fact FBI agents who had prior knowledge of brutal slayings and took an active part in them.

STIRRED NEW STRUGGLES IN NORTH

The Black uprising in the South stirred new struggles in the North. There, the shadow of the plantation had followed millions of Black people who had been forced to migrate from the South's poverty and Klan terror. Ghetto residents faced police brutality and severe discrimination. Large-scale rebellions rocked the entire country.

Although conservative leaders like those in the NAACP called for restraint, the masses of people from North Carolina to Mississippi quickly rose to defend themselves. Organizations which armed themselves to protect the Black community, such as Deacons for Defense and Justice in Bougaloosa, Louisiana, eventually spread to 40 cities. The struggle revealed that legal rights were meaningless without political power to back them up.

Activists in the thick of battle began asking deep questions, probing for more far-reaching solutions. Malcolm X concluded, "It is the government itself, the government of America that is responsible for the oppression, exploitation and degradation of Black people in this country...This government has failed the Negro. This so-called democracy has failed the Negro. And all of these white liberals have definitely failed the Negro."

In Alabama, Black citizens summed up their experience like this, "The people of Lowndes County found that its politicans wouldn't listen to them when they were acting through a civil rights organization. The people discovered that unless they had political power, all they could do was *ask* for their rights."

But what was the road to political power —— how could it be attained? A great debate arose which continues today. The most far-sighted leaders of the Black liberation movement called for the complete overthrow of the imperialist system, which is run by a handful of big corporations and banks. They called for armed struggle, knowing that the imperialists would never surrender their wealth without an armed revolution.

The reformist leaders in the main civil rights organizations, on the other hand, claimed that what was needed was a "peaceful revolution" through the ballot box. Armed self-defense and armed struggle, they insisted, would only bring about more problems. They initally even opposed the slogan of "Black power," fearing it would cut them off from wealthy liberal backers. Once they saw its influence among the masses, however, they switched tactics and tried to distort its meaning and revolutionary implications. In their view, "Black power" simply meant more elected Black officials politically and various schemes for "Black capitalism" economically. Thus, the view of relying on the state and the capitalist system to bring about freedom and equality for Black people was given a new disguise in the people's movement.

It has now been over ten years since this "peaceful revolution" began with the Voting Rights Act. We should carefully examine the results.

Thousands of Black people have braved all risks, including loss of their jobs and often times their lives, to register to vote in the Black Belt. Figures from the Voter Education Project show that there are now 27 times more Black elected officials in the South than in 1965. Today there are nearly

Rural housing in the "New South" remains the same despite rise in Black elected officials.

2,129 such officials. Louisiana leads with 278.

Can it be said that the Afro-American people now enjoy self-determination and democracy? Are Black people no longer at the mercy of the imperialist lynchers?

In the Deep South lies a crescent of contiguous territory of Black concentration, stretching from the eastern shores of Maryland southward through Georgia and westward to Texas. It was here that the Afro-American people developed all the characteristics of an oppressed nation. It is also here that gerrymandered state and county lines, plus the armed power of the state, have kept Black people from representation and political rights. (See article reprinted from *The Call,* "Eyes Focus on the South.")

RISE OF BLACK ELECTED OFFICIALS

Fifty-three percent of all Black people still reside in the South, where there are over 111 counties with a Black majority. But despite all the talk of Jimmy Carter's liberated and enlightened "New South," Blacks still only account for 2.6% of all public officials in the eleven Southern states.

More important, however, is the fact that these Black officials serve merely as brokers for their white corporate masters. The same huge monopolies and banks —— backed up by the government apparatus in Washington, the police, the courts and the U.S. Army —— who have always held power, continue to do so in the South, regardless of the number of Black elected officials. Even Richard Hatcher, Black mayor of Gary, Indiana, was forced to admit that he cannot guarantee "...that Black people will share in the unbelievable profits of the U.S. Steel Corporation which dominates the city's economic life."

As a Black student leader from Clark College in Atlanta told a gathering of Black elected officials there: "The question, gentlemen, is this: Is this really a 'new' reconstruction or is this the same *old* reconstruction with the same *old* ending...My fellow students have their doubts; and I don't blame them as I, too, have my doubts." The point was a good one. The ballot box "revolution" has made only slight changes for the Black population and the reforms won have usually benefited but a few.

The deal made in 1877 between the newly-developed imperialist class in the North and the plantation owners smashed Reconstruction. Its signified the end of an era when the problems of the Afro-American people could be resolved within a capitalist framework.

For example, in the years following this alliance, Louisiana disenfranchised all but 5,000 of the 130,000 Black voters. Power was taken away from the legislature, which had a number of Blacks, and put in the hands of "police juries" at the parish level which were appointed from above.

In its final and reactionary stage, capitalism has no interest in freeing nations. In fact, since the late 1800s it has embarked on a course of grabbing colonies around the world, thriving from these super-profits. A democratic solution to the Afro-American peoples' oppression is not possible so long as

this tiny class of rich parasites continues its rule. It must be overthrown.

The Communist Party (M-L) has pointed out in its Program: "The right to self-determination is the working class program for guaranteeing complete equality for the Afro-American people. The exercising of this right is bound up with the working class struggle to overthrow the imperialist system."

6. How Can Working Class Unity Be Built?

Across the South, the upsurge of the Black liberation struggle has left a deep imprint on the whole workers' movement.

A series of 36 wildcat strikes shook Atlanta's ruling circles in 1972. Led by Black workers, strikes like the one at Mead Corporation combined demands for better working conditions with the fight against racial discrimination.

The first real breakthrough in the organization of Southern textile workers was made in the small Black Belt town of Andrews, S. Carolina. There, the lessons of the civil rights movement, of mass demonstrations and a fight against the city's power structure, were brought to the Oneita strike and grasped by both Black and white workers.

These battles prove what strength and power is to be had when the workers' movement and the Black liberation struggles are linked together.

Today, many have become aware of the reason why the South is the nation's haven for runaway shops. Politically, the same machinery used to deprive Black people of even their most elementary democratic rights is also brought to bear against unionization and the workers' movement. The same year that Gary Tyler was framed, striking American Cyanamid workers in St. Charles Parish were locked out, and the plant is now working a scab crew.

The inevitable by-product of imperialism's enslavement of the Black nation has been the lowering of conditions for the entire laboring population there. Southern white workers on the whole earn $3,000 less than those in the North. The ability of shops to run away acts as a huge depressing factor on wages and working conditions throughout the country.

That is why the oppression of the Afro-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian and Native American peoples is not only a battle for these oppressed people but is also of greatest concern to the whole working class.

"Labor with a white skin cannot free itself where labor with a black skin is branded." This famous quote by Karl Marx, founder of scientific socialism, could not be more true today.

In its fight to overthrow the wage-slavery system, the working class cannot gain its victory without the greatest solidarity in its own ranks. And this unity is *only* possible if all workers, particularly the white workers, take a fighting stand against all instances of national oppression, making a clean break with the chauvinism of the labor aristocracy. Only then can a strong alliance be built.

Today, this fighting stand has its expression in the movement to Free Gary Tyler, which is being taken into an ever larger number of trade unions and which has been joined by many white working people. Increasingly led by communists, the fight against discrimination in the big factories is being linked with the battles against wage cuts, layoffs and speedup. Homes of Black families, targets of KKK terror, are being ringed by all-night defense vigils in Boston, Chicago, Detroit and Louisville. The quicker the response of the white workers to these injustices, the stronger unity will grow!

The goal of the workers' movement is to bring about a new socialist system, where power will be in the hands of the working class and the exploitation by capitalist parasites will be ended. This fight for socialism is completely linked with the fight against oppression of nations by the imperialists. The working class must be the staunchest defender of equality —— of individuals like Gary Tyler, and of nations, like the Afro-American people.

The fight for equality must extend to the full right of Black people to self-determination and political power in the Black Belt South. It was in the old plantation areas that African slaves were first brought in chains to work as chattel labor. For centuries, it was here that Black people fought and died, tilling the land, building railroads and factories, and fighting for freedom. It is in the Black Belt that the roots of Afro-American oppression can be found.

FIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

The working class must fight for the right to self-determination and complete equality for the Afro-American people. In particular, in the Black Belt region of the Deep South, the Black nation must have the right to secede, to federate or to establish a form of regional autonomy in relation to the U.S. as a whole. The key issue, however, is not what form this should take. The substance of the matter is: Who should rule the Black Belt? Should political power be in the hands of the imperialists and the plantation owners? Or should it be in the hands of the Black masses and their revolutionary allies? The answer is clear and it provides the real meaning of self-determination and its relation to the overall struggle for socialism. It is a guarantee for all other equal rights and is *raised with the aim of building voluntary unity* between the workers of all nationalities, on the one hand, and the movements of the oppressed nationalities, on the other. Just as the right to divorce enables a more equal and unifed marriage between men and women, so the right of self-determination builds stronger unity between the workers and oppressed nations.

In socialist China today, such a policy on equality has led to a strong workers' government and unbreakable unity between the many nationalities which comprise its people. With the government firmly in the hands of the working people, chauvinist ideas are combatted. Formerly the people of minority nationalities, such as the Tibetan people, were slaves and serfs. Today, the Tibetan, Mongolian and other nationalities govern autonomous areas in the People's Republic. The culture of various minority nationalities, of which there are 54, was viciously suppressed under the rule of the landlords and imperialism. Today, their national cultures and languages are flourishing and are respected by the Han working people throughout the country. Special economic policies have been adopted to wipe out inequalities left over from the rule of imperialism. By overthrowing their common oppressors and establishing socialism, the basis has been laid for wiping out national oppression there forever. The establishment of socialism in the United States would lay the basis here for wiping out national oppression.

> ***"Labor with a white skin cannot free itself where labor with a Black skin is branded."***
> ***Karl Marx***

7. Conclusion

Many have compared the frame-up case of Gary Tyler to that of the nine Scottsboro Boys of Alabama some 45 years ago. Both cases have gained worldwide recognition.

It is fair to say that one could hardly go to any city in the country, any union meeting, or any gathering of the unemployed in the '30s without hearing about Scottsboro. Just the name came to symbolize the brutal Jim Crow and plantation system in the Deep South. "Scottsboro" also came to symbolize a powerful resistance movement which had a significant impact on the development of both the Black freedom struggle and the workers' movement.

At that time, the U.S. working class had its own revolutionary party. In those days, Communist Party members could be found anywhere that people

were fighting against injustice and exploitation. Made up of the best fighters of the working class of every nationality, these communists brought with them not only disciplined organization, but most importantly, the revolutionary aims of abolishing imperialism and establishing socialism.

Although many workers had fought and died in America's proud labor history ——to build unions or attain the eight-hour day —— for the first time, the ideas of socialism were becoming merged with the day-to-day struggles. This meant a tremendous increase in the fighting capacity of the workers, who were finally seeing how they could one day be free.

The ability of the once-revolutionary CPUSA to build bonds between workers of different nationalities was directly based on its stand against national oppression and for the right of self-determination for Black people. The system of Jim Crow segregation and lack of rights, it maintained, rested on the subjugation of Black people as an oppressed nation in the Black Belt South. On this basis, the party was able to boldly take up battles like Scottsboro. It organized militant unions, including spearheading the drives to organize the steel mills in Alabama, the miners in Kentucky and the textile workers in the Carolinas.

A huge advance was made during those years in cementing a powerful alliance between the workers' movement and the Black liberation struggle. Thousands of Black workers and freedom fighters joined the ranks of the old CP as did thousands of white workers who were educated in the battle against white chauvinism.

Communists were the first to take up the Scottsboro Defense, distinguishing themselves from the conservative, reformist-led NAACP at every step. The hardest fighters for Scottsboro freedom, they showed that this case was not simply one of nine innocent youths in Alabama, but a product of imperialist rule.

Although the International Labor Defense and the Party hired the most capable lawyers, they were the first to note that the courts were the instruments of the rich and must never be relied upon. They took Scottsboro to the streets of Atlanta, Paris, New York, London and Chicago. Millions came to see that lynch terror could only be fought by a vast revolutionary movement and that this was the only course for freeing the Scottsboro Nine.

But what happened to the CPUSA? As with everything in society, it contained a contradiction, a struggle reflecting the viewpoints of the different classes. On one side stood the proletariat, with its outlook of Marxism-Leninism. On the other side was a handful of representatives of the capitalists who managed to weasel their way into the Party. They advocated revisionism, i.e., bourgeois ideology disguised as Marxism-Leninism.

The struggle between these two lines is a constant feature of every revolutionary party. Even in the CPUSA's revolutionary period, when a Marxist-Leninst line was firmly in command, the revisionists waged an underhanded struggle to sabotage and prevent the Party from carrying out its tasks. By the time of the Second World War, the revisionist Earl Browder had a grip on the leadership of the Party. He did away with the right to self-determination, preached class-collaboration and even tried to dissolve the party itself.

Browder was expelled after the war. The Party reconstituted its revolutionary line and began to move forward again. Browder's influence and many of his followers, however, remained in the Party. They worked feverishly to regain control.

By the mid-1950s, this revisionist clique managed to wreck the Party and seize control of its remnants. They renounced Marxism-Leninsm, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the need for armed revolution. Instead they claimed to base themselves on "American democratic traditions" and the "constitutional path." Instead of overthrowing imperialism, they sought to save it and patch it up from within through "anti-monopoly reforms."

The revisionists also threw out the Party's former stand on Afro-American self-determination. They concluded that because many Black people were being driven from the South, a nation no longer existed there. Because Black people could supposedly "reform" their way to equality through the Supreme Court and Congress, self-determination was no longer necessary. The job that remained was simply to "retire" some Southern congressmen and

On July 24, 1976, over 2,000 joined the Free Gary Tyler march in New Orleans.

keep up the pressure for more reforms.

When the earth-shaking civil rights battles of the '60s burst forth, the CPUSA trailed miserably behind even the conservative NAACP. They denounced the most militant leaders of the movement like Robert F. Williams and cautioned against armed self-defense. The CPUSA dismissed Malcolm X's revolutionary views as "irresponsible drivel."

Gary Tyler had spent nearly three years in jail before the revisionist newspaper, the Daily World, made mention of his case. (See June 9, 1977, Daily World.) While attacking the CPML and the many organizations and individuals who have fought to free Tyler, the CPUSA itself has done nothing to build the Tyler movement. In all the repression cases it has worked——Joan Little, Ronnie Long, the Wilmington 10, etc.——the revisionist party has tried to preach reliance on liberal judges and "detente" schemes between the two superpowers.

Many fighters in the Black liberation and workers' struggles have learned from their own experience that, in order to overthrow imperialism, these revisionist traitors must be isolated and expelled from our movement.

The CPUSA closely mirrors its masters in the Soviet Union who have become the biggest imperialists and chauvinists. These "new tsars" viciously attack the many minority nationalities within the Soviet Union and the nations of the third world as well.

On Nov. 10, 1976, 92,000 signatures were presented to Gov. Edwards of Louisiana demanding freedom for Tyler.

June 4, 1977 marked the founding of the Communist Party (M-L), the first genuine communist Party since the betrayal of the CPUSA. This Party inherits the best traditions of the veteran communist fighters and, at the same time, is being built in complete opposition to the revisionist CPUSA and the Trotskyites.

Today we are struggling to stand this Party firmly on its feet and make it truly the Party that the masses of workers and oppressed people recognize as their own fighting vanguard. Such a party can only be built in the heat of class struggle. Built on firm Marxist-Leninist principles and composed of the most dedicated and advanced fighters from the people themselves, the new Party will eventually lead the struggle to overthrow imperialism and establish socialism.

The CPML has been fighting and organizing across the country for the freedom of Gary Tyler and others like him. We realize that the rulers of this country fear nothing more than the building of a revolutionary movement, particularly one which closely unites all nationalities against a common enemy. It is this sort of movement and nothing less that can win Gary Tyler's freedom and strike a blow at those who have grown fat on the wealth which we, the workers of all nationalities, have produced!

FREE GARY TYLER!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE AFRO-AMERICAN NATION!
WORKERS OF ALL NATIONALITIES UNITE!
DEFEAT IMPERIALISM, FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!

Appendix

From The Call—July 19, 1976

Odis Hyde Speaks on Tyler Case

Chicago, Ill.—An enthusiastic crowd gathered on this city's South Side July 9 to hear veteran communist Odis Hyde speak about the history of Afro-American oppression that surrounds the frame-up of Gary Tyler.

Hyde, who took part in the Black liberation and workers' struggles in Chicago for more than 40 years, is a member of the October League's Central Committee.

Hyde began his speech by showing how the frame-up of Gary Tyler is bound up with the history of capitalism.

"The Tyler case has a history," he said, "just as this country has a history, just as every living thing has a history. The history of this country is the blood of millions of Indians; the Chicano people being driven from their lands and the most precious part of this country west of the Mississippi being taken by blood and bullets from a whole people; the slave chains of 20 million Africans brought to this land to make it rich and beautiful. I cannot glorify this country. My grandmother was a slave!"

Odis Hyde was born in Louisiana, and talked about conditions in the South for Black people even today. He exposed the efforts of Jimmy Carter to pass himself off as a "common man" and a "friend" to Black people. Hyde stated, "He's a millionaire. You ever been to Plains, Georgia? It's a peanut plantation area. I've been there. The ground's so red," Hyde went on, "that I sometimes think it's red from the slaves' blood."

"That town has two schools and they're falling apart; the roofs leak and the windows are busted and the county won't fix them." Why? he asked. "Because they integrated the schools. That's America! And it's happening everywhere."

Hyde went on to speak about the common interests of Black and white workers in fighting the capitalist system. "White workers are going to have to understand that the only reason they dragged us over here in chains was because cheap Black labor could drive down the cost of all labor." He showed how labor in the white skin couldn't be free while Black labor was being oppressed.

Speaking directly to the white workers in the audience, he said, "But you ain't got nothing but labor either! You got to fight because the system is aimed at you as well as Black folks. So either we survive together or we perish separately."

He spoke about the need for leadership and organization in the struggle against the capitalists. "Us poor people have nothing but our labor power, nothing but our ability to work. To win we must have a political party. Every class that ever ruled in the history of the world had a political party and it's no different for the working class. And we must organize it. Rockefeller ain't going to come down here and give us a communist party to take what he has. We must build our communist party!"

"So you see," Hyde concluded, "Tyler is a symbol of the history of this country. We will never stop the Gary Tylers while capitalism still exists. We may halt a few, but next week they'll have another one, and another one. We have got to attack the citadels that rule this country that are rooted in racism, greed, exploitation, and social injustice." As the audience rose to its feet, Hyde exclaimed, "It is damnable, it is parasitical, and it must be destroyed! It is up to you to do it!"

From The Call—July 26, 1976

Eyes Focus On the South

This week, thousands of eyes will be focused on the South, where a Black youth named Gary Tyler is fighting for his life in New Orleans, Louisiana. People from all over the South will converge on this old slave capital demanding not only that Tyler be freed, but that the millions of Afro-American people finally get equality and democratic rights, including the right of self-determination.

The South has always had special importance in the overall struggle of the working class and of Black people in particular. The frame-up of Gary Tyler symbolizes the themes of white supremacy, slavery and national oppression which run throughout southern history. On the other side of the picture stands the revolutionary history of the southern working people, Black and white, who have never accepted their special oppression for one moment.

It was the Communist Party, when it was still a revolutionary vanguard party of the proletariat, that first offered a scientific understanding of the nature of the Southern struggle, showing that the history of the South was bound up with the history of slavery and that the question of Black liberation was directly connected to the liberation of the working class.

Karl Marx himself, who studied the South and the anti-slavery struggle carefully, saw how Southern slavery laid the basis for the development of U.S. capitalism and the enslavement of all working people. He pointed the way forward for the early working-class struggle by showing that, **"labor in the white skin cannot free itself where labor with a Black skin is branded."**

With the end of the Civil War and the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, a short period called Reconstruction led to some of the most important gains ever registered by the Southern workers. Blacks held pro-

Drawing by D. Scott

minent positions in Southern government and significant reforms were won for all workers. The 8-hour day became a battle cry of all working people as the labor movement rose to its feet. Large tracts of land were granted to newly freed slaves as the plantation system began to be broken up.

But these gains were short-lived and soon reversed as the capitalist ruling class in the North betrayed the Reconstruction efforts and formed an alliance with the overthrown slave owners to consolidate the rule of capitalism and white supremacy over the South and the rest of the U.S.

It was at this time that the millions of former Black slaves completed their development as an oppressed nation within the former slave areas of the South—the Black Belt.

The experiences of three centuries of enslavement coupled with continuous resistance culminating in the Civil War and Reconstruction had given Afro-Americans all the features of nationhood. They had inhabited the Black Belt land continuously. They spoke a common language, shared a common economic life, and had developed a common culture and psychological make-up.

As the Black communist theoretician Harry Haywood wrote: "Within the borders of the United States, and under the jurisdiction of a single central government, there exist, not one, but two nations: a dominant white nation, with its Anglo-Saxon hierarchy, and a subject black one...The Negro is American. He is the product of every social and economic struggle that has made America. But the Negro is a special kind of American, to the extent that his oppression has set him apart from the dominant white nation. Under the pressure of these circumstances, he has generated all the objective attributes of nationhood."

RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Based upon this scientific analysis of the historic conditions, the communists first raised the slogan calling for the right of self-determination, or the right to establish a separate independent state for the Black nation in the Black Belt. Through the course of the struggle, they championed the cause of democratic rights for Black people north and south, demanded the break-up of the plantation system and redistribution of land to Black and poor white farmers. The demand for self-determination did not mean, as its enemies asserted, that communists called for the setting up of a separate "Black republic" in the South or for separation of any kind. It simply meant that the Black nation would have the *right* to establish a separate state should the 20 million Black people find it necessary to do so.

The right of self-determination was linked closely with all of the work that communists carried out around the Afro-American question throughout the country. But it was in the South in particular, working under the most difficult conditions, that communists proved themselves as the vanguard of the working class. Whether it was in the great textile strikes in the '20s which swept the area from Virginia to Georgia, or the strikes of white Kentucky miners in 1932, or whether they were fighting against unemployment and the threat of fascism, the communists took the struggle for equality and self-determination to thousands of Black and white workers in the mines and mills.

A veteran of those struggles, Nanny Washburn, who joined the party in the '20s as a white worker, remembered that "the work was very difficult in those days." She said that most of the work had to be carried out secretly "because of the widespread use of terror including the Klan which was directed against the communists." Nanny Washburn pointed to the slogan of "self-determination" as the central theme in the work she carried out to free the many political prisoners whose cases the party took up.

Perhaps the most famous example was that of the Scottsboro Boys—nine Black youths who were jailed in 1931 in Scottsboro, Alabama, on

charges of having raped two white girls on a freight train. Actually the rape never occurred, as Ruby Bates, one of the girls, later publicly testified.

Communists like Nanny Washburn took this struggle to free the Scottsboro Boys and made it into an international issue, using it to vividly expose to all the world, the fraud of U.S. capitalist democracy. Especially among the white workers, they showed how the history of slavery was still alive and that an injury to one was an injury to all. The struggle finally ended in victory 20 years later when the last of the Scottsboro prisoners was released.

Efforts like the Scottsboro case, the formation of the Sharecroppers Union in Tallapoosa County, Alabama, the campaign to free Angelo Herndon and many others gave the communists their much-earned reputation as the most militant and revolutionary defenders of the workers and especially the Afro-American people. It earned them the sacred trust of millions of working people, a trust which was later to be betrayed by the revisionists such as Earl Browder in the late 1930s and the modern revisionists of today in the Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA).

Completely abandoning the revolutionary struggle of the working class for socialism and for Black liberation, the CPUSA first dropped the slogan for the right of self-determination and completely withdrew from the strategically important South. Abandoning the Southern labor movement to the racist politicians and labor misleaders, the revisionists left the masses of Black people without working-class leadership in the periods of great upsurge, including the civil rights movement of the late '60s.

Dropping the revolutionary struggle for political power and self-determination, the revisionists claimed that self-determination "had already been exercised" and that Black people simply wished to integrate into the mainstream of U.S. society. Instead of revolutionary struggle, they promoted the electoral struggle and the liberal politicians as the saviors of Black people.

NEW COMMUNIST PARTY BEING BUILT

Today a new communist party is being built upon revolutionary foundations and in opposition to revisionism. One of these foundations is the struggle for Black liberation as a revolutionary struggle. The great traditions of communist struggle are being restored to their proper place and once again groups like the October League are taking up the important work in the South. The slogan of "self-determination" is being raised once again in the course of struggle for the freedom of Gary Tyler, Cheryl Todd and Desi X Woods, Joan Little and others.

The hundreds of Black prisoners filling the death row cells from North Carolina to Texas are but one example of the fact that all the talk about the "New South" is a pack of lies. The few gains won during the civil rights movement are rapidly being eroded. The basic conditions of life for millions of Black and poor white people in the South are in essence the same as they have always been. The only thing "new" about the South

is that the struggle of the people against oppression is being built on a higher level than ever before.

The struggle in the South is expanding widely. Last year's Southern Fight Back Conference brought hundreds of workers to Eastabutchie, Mississippi. In Louisville, Ky., the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), once under the thumb of the revisionists, is being turned into a mass workers' organization under revolutionary leadership to build the southern movement. The busloads of hundreds of people from Texas to Georgia coming to New Orleans to free Gary Tyler show the results and the potentials of this work.

From The Call—August 9, 1976

Which Road for Tyler's Freedom?

The militant march and rally of thousands of Gary Tyler supporters in New Orleans on July 24 was a good example of relying on the masses of poor and working people as the main force to free political prisoners such as Gary Tyler. The success of the mass actions that were held, however, only came as a result of a struggle between two opposing views of how to struggle for reforms such as freedom for Gary Tyler and other political prisoners.

The approach advocated by the Trotskyite Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and a minority of people in the New Orleans Defense Committee, such as the opportunist Walter Collins, had to be defeated in order for the July 24 action to be successful.

These opportunists did everything they could to narrow the scope of the actions. A brief review of their stand on a few questions leading up to the march will go a long way in exposing the counter-revolutionary essence of their political views.

From the beginning, the SWP, along with Collins, questioned the "advisability" of a march. Their opposition was put forth on the grounds that there "might" not be an official permit. Later, they raised the fear that there might be a "confrontation" with the Ku Klux Klan. The opportunists tried to cover their tails by pleading "concern" for the masses' safety. This is the same tactic they used in sabotaging the April 24 march in Boston against segregation.

In actuality, they were trying to make the march "respectable" to the bourgeoisie and were scared to death of class struggle. These reformists feared most that Tyler's case would be linked in people's minds with the struggles of the millions of other working people suffering under capitalism.

This became clear when the SWP brazenly opposed having any revolutionary speakers . . . According to SWP's opportunist logic, in order to have a "wider appeal," all the speakers would have to be "non-revolutionary." They

proposed instead that the speakers be exclusively local clergymen and bourgeois politicians. They even went so far as to suggest that the head of the state AFL-CIO, a labor aristocrat and known enemy of Afro-American and working-class people, be a principal speaker at the rally.

With regard to political slogans for the march, the SWP opposed demands such as "Self-Determination for the Afro-American Nation" and "Full Democratic Rights for Black People." When the SWP's opposition to the slogan concerning democratic rights was made known in a New Orleans Defense Committee meeting, participants burst into unbelieving laughter as the SWP representative sat shamefacedly silent, his organization's line glaringly exposed.

Walter Collins, for his part, has used his position as chairman of the New Orleans Committee to attempt to bolster his allies in the SWP and their fellow Trotskyites in the International Socialists in their attempts to represent the Tyler defense in other cities such as Atlanta, Houston, Boston, etc. But, "Flowers fall off, do what one may," and as the buses rolled in from across the South and actions occurred simultaneously in cities across the country, the Trotskyites were conspicuously absent. Even in New Orleans, the SWP presence was pitifully weak. Collins refused to even participate in the march through downtown New Orleans.

In struggling against the opportunists, representatives of the October League, the Fightback and a majority of other forces in the New Orleans Committee refuted their arguments forcefully in word and deed. For example, regarding a permit for the march, it was pointed out that the ruling class (which runs the city government) would only give their "permission" to a revolutionary action if they knew the people were determined to march anyway, with or without their "permission."

KLAN ARE COWARDS

As for a "confrontation" with the Klan, it is well know that the Klan has been cowardly, confronting only individuals and small groups of Black people for years, and that the main assurance against a confrontation with these reactionaries is a policy of mass revolutionary action combined with self-defense by any means necessary. The cowardly Klan, faced with a mass militant demonstration of thousands, failed to show up anywhere near the rally and march.

The opportunist argument of only having "non-revolutionary"speakers and slogans in order to get "wider appeal" was also refuted. Those speeches which were best received were those . . . which pointed to the imperialist system itself as the cause of all national oppression and linked the struggle to free Gary Tyler to the need for the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist system and to the demand for Afro-American self-determination.

The struggle against opportunism in the defense efforts for Gary Tyler has laid the basis for re-structuring the New Orleans Defense Committee as well

as for greater coordination of national efforts. The July 24 actions for Tyler's freedom provide a correct model for the future direction of all defense efforts. Gary Tyler himself voiced this perspective when he wrote in support of the July 24th demonstrations that "I am convinced that mass demonstrations involving thousands of people are necessary to win my freedom."

From The Call—August 30, 1976

Letter from Tyler

Dear Comrades,

I am in receipt of your letter that found me in the utmost of strength and good spirit. I also received the *Calls* that you sent, and thank you for sending them...

It is beautiful how *The Call* has gotten many people involved in the struggle and my case. It has opened the eyes of many oppressed people, and it has made the masses more determined to fight against this capitalist government. Your paper has made me more aware of the struggle the working class people are in to fight against this devil—the perpetrator of racism.

We shall fight until we win by any means!

Gary Tyler

From The Call—November 22, 1976

Tyler Supporters March on Court

As Gary Tyler went before the Louisiana Supreme Court the morning of Nov. 10, over 150 angry demonstrators converged on the courthouse demanding "Free Gary Tyler."

Many community residents and workers joined the mile-and-a-half march and rally despite laws prohibiting courthouse picketing. The marchers linked the fight for Tyler's freedom to demands for an end to KKK attacks and for self-determination for Afro-Americans.

Inside the courthouse, the state's racist laws forced lawyers to appeal for Tyler's immediate release only on technical grounds despite overwhelming evidence of his innocence. Tyler's original appeal was turned down by the

same judge who convicted him in the first place. The court may take anywhere from one to six months to reach a decision.

After two years in jail, Tyler remains incarcerated on trumped-up charges of murder. When a racist mob attacked the school bus Tyler was riding, a white student was killed. Although the facts prove his innocence, Tyler was framed for murder.

In an interview with the Southern Patriot newspaper, Tyler said, "I'm for the demonstrations... End oppression by every means. Oppression has got to go." The Southern Patriot is the newspaper of the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) which has been active in the Tyler freedom movement.

Support for Tyler's case, as a symbol of the whole system of national oppression, is spreading like wildfire. Over 1,500 miles away in Denver, Colorado, a large crowd of Chicanos, Afro-Americans, and white workers marched on the state capitol.

The march occurred simultaneously with the New Orleans demonstration. It was led by the OL in conjunction with the Colorado Workers Unity Organization, the local branch of the Collective Federation of Teachers and the National Lawyers Guild. It was also endorsed by the URW Local 724. At the conclusion, the Denver marchers joined in singing the "Ballad of Gary Tyler."

In Houston's mostly Black housing project, Kelly Courts, an inspiring rally was held where speakers from the Houston People's Coalition Against Repression (PCAR) linked the Tyler freedom struggle with the government cover-up of the Klan attack on a memorial service for Mao Tsetung and other anti-communist attacks.

BROAD SUPPORT FOR TYLER

Strongly expressing the revolutionary tradition of Afro-Americans, Houston's Clemme Manor Freedom Dancers, an all-girls group ranging from 7 to 10 years old, performed dances in support of Tyler's freedom. Three bands from the community also played on Tyler's behalf.

In Detroit, a number of new groups have been drawn into the struggle including PUSH, Focus Hope and a veterans group from the Detroit Institute of Technology. Speakers tied the case to the growing threat of government-backed Klan terror in that city which has seen a rising number of cross burnings and anti-Black harassment.

In the very heart of the Black Belt, the Birmingham Committee to Free Gary Tyler led a demonstration on Nov. 6 right through the city's downtown center. Despite futile attempts by the city officials to stop the march, the streets rang with cries of "Free Gary Tyler," and "Self-Determination for the Afro-American Nation."

In the Bay Area, a benefit dance was held where nearly 400 people turned out. Many different nationalities were represented and almost one hundred new Tyler pamphlets were sold. Various speakers addressed the crowd about the struggle to free Gary Tyler and many related aspects.

Activities were also held in many other cities, while others are still to

WORLDWIDE SUPPORT FOR TYLER

THE FORGE

Workers of all countries, oppressed peoples and nations, unite !

FREE GARY TYLER

proletarios de todo el mundo unios

SERVIR AL PUEBLO IJ4

Pena de muerte es arma capitalista.

l'Humanité rouge

MORT AU FASCISME !
SAUVONS GARY TYLER !

ROTE FAHNE
KOMMUNISTISCHER BUND LUXEMBURG (KBL)

Freiheit für Gary Tyler!

KLASSEKAMPEN

BARE MASSESTØTTE KAN SETTE GARY TYLER FRI:

take place. Most cities are continuing the freedom struggle in efforts towards even larger activities on Dec. 4, Anti-Repression Day.

The day following the State Supreme Court hearing Mutual Black Network News carried an on-the-hour broadcast with a statement from the People's Coalition to Free Gary Tyler, reaching millions of radio listeners across the country.

Also, Gil Scott-Heron, the well-known singer, recently released a new album on which the cut "Bicentennial Blues" expresses support for Tyler.

The recent protest demonstrations, by relying on the broad masses, are concrete steps to freeing Gary Tyler. Also they have further exposed the capitalist system, the root cause of all national oppression, and strengthened our fight for socialism and self-determination.

From The Call—November 22, 1976

Actions Held Worldwide in Support of Tyler

Gary Tyler's appeal to the Louisiana Supreme Court was supported by demonstrations and solidarity actions by people around the world.

In Montreal, Canada, on Nov. 10, the Afro-Asian Latin-American People's Solidarity Committee mobilized more than 300 people outside the U.S. Consulate to demand "Freedom For Gary Tyler!" "Down With U.S. Imperialism" and "Opposition to Both Superpowers!" The demonstration was followed later by a rally where statements of support for Gary Tyler were heard from dozens of Canadian and Quebecois organizations and individuals. A resolution was passed by more than 20 organizations demanding Tyler's immediate release.

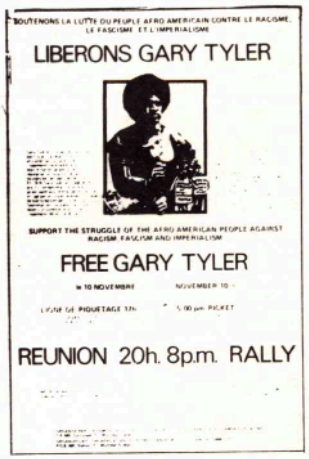
The rally heard a representative of the People's Defense Coalition to Free Gary Tyler who spoke of the case and its relation to the long history of Afro-American struggle for liberation, self-determination and democratic rights. He also expressed solidarity with the workers and oppressed nationalities in Canada in their struggle against the Canadian reactionary ruling class and in opposition to the two superpowers.

Among the groups supporting Tyler was the Canadian Communist League (M-L) and the Toronto Study Group (SG), a Black Marxist-Leninist study cell, which led a demonstration in Toronto Nov. 9 in addition to participating in the Montreal actions. In a statement to the October League, the CCL expressed their support for the Free Tyler movement, calling Tyler "a symbol of resistance of all the oppressed peoples of the world against fascism and racism." They added: "We wish on Nov. 10, to express and to point out concretely the link between these struggles in Canada and struggle throughout the world against all forms of

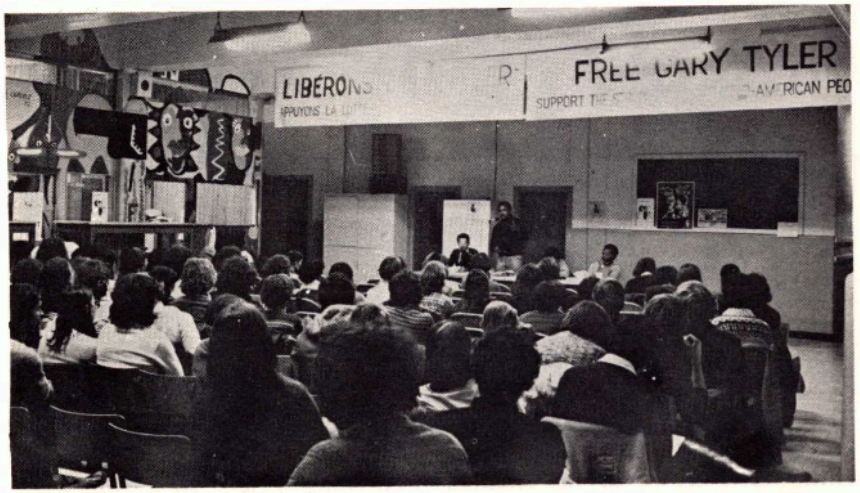
oppression, in particular for the freedom of Gary Tyler."

The Indian People's Association in North America also gave full support to the demonstrations in Canada. A solidarity message from IPANA stated, "IPANA is an organization representing patriotic Indians resident in North America. Our beloved country has long been and continues to be a victim of imperialist domination and exploitation by U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism.... In this struggle of ours we stand together in solidarity with all the oppressed people and nations of the world."

IPANA's statement concludes: "Gary Tyler's struggle for life and freedom symbolizes the long-suppressed and genuine aspiration of Afro-



March and rally held in Montreal, Canada Nov. 10, 1976.



Americans and other minorities for total and final emancipation which is intrinsically linked today with the total and final defeat of imperialism."

The week of Nov. 10 also saw the building of broad support for Gary Tyler across Western Europe and Latin America. A statement was received from the Norwegian Anti-Imperialist Third World Committee saying that it had initiated a campaign to "Free Gary Tyler" and to "Stop the Execution." The Committee's journal Tredje Verden ("Third World") carried a statement in its Nov. 3 issue saying that the oppression of Afro-Americans and other minorities in the U.S. "must be met by wide protests, not only in the U.S., but in all countries."

In Colombia, the newspaper Jornada Camilista of the communist group Movimiento Camilista (M-L) carried an article in their October issue expressing solidarity with the struggle of "our Black and white brothers in New Orleans in the case of Gary Tyler." The article says that the Camilistas are taking up the struggle of "our fraternal newspaper *El Clarín,* the organ of the October League."

The Call also received articles from the French Marxist-Leninist newspaper l'Humanite Rouge building support in that country for Tyler's freedom. Two French workers, Christine and Herve Cotton, wrote: "We are with you, Gary. With you until liberation. With you and your Afro-American brothers."

The international support being built for Tyler's freedom shows the growing unity of the workers and peoples of all countries against imperialism and racism. The working and oppressed throughout the world have always expressed their militant solidarity for the Afro-American struggle. Their support for Gary Tyler is a powerful inspiration to the people in this country to intensify their efforts until Tyler's freedom is finally won.

From The Call—May 2, 1977

New Film—'Gary Tyler Must Be Free'

Gary Tyler Must Be Free, a recently-released color documentary by October Films, is a new weapon in the struggle to free Gary Tyler. It tells the story of Tyler, framed on murder charges for standing up to racists and sentenced to die in the electric chair at the age of 17. Most of all, it tells the story of how a worldwide movement has been built to free Gary Tyler and to demand an end to all oppression against Afro-American people.

Many of the thousands who have been mobilized to demand Tyler's freedom come alive on the screen—demonstrating, organizing, singing and rapping at plant gates. At the film's recent premier showing, an enthusiastic crowd of 400 chanted "Free Gary Tyler!" in unison with

demonstrators in scenes of last July's huge Free Gary Tyler march in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The film traces the origins of Black oppression from the days of slavery in the South, the historic homeland of the Afro-American people. It shows how, rather than "liberating" Black people, the defeat of slavery and the rise of capitalism in the South has intensified their suffering.

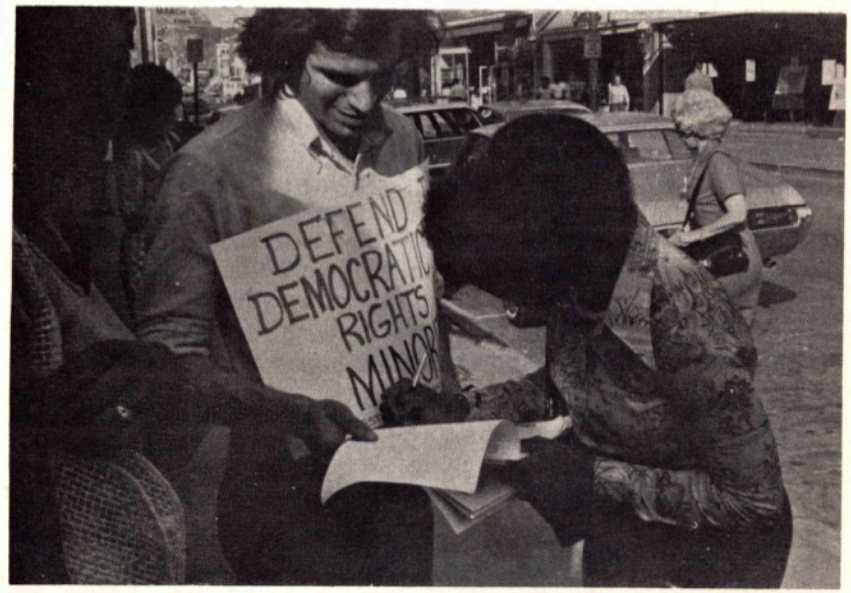
Most importantly, it points out clearly the need to fight for Afro-American self-determination and for socialism as the only way to end national oppression.

The film dispels the myth that the oppression of Black people is the result of racism among white workers. It shows that workers of every nationality can be organized to fight against national oppression and that this must be done in the course of fighting against capitalism—the common oppressor of all working people.

Through scenes of community meetings and demonstrations, the film shows how organizations like the People's Defense Committee (PDC) and the National Fight Back Organization worked to build this kind of broad support.

Organizers relied on the masses and not on the courts. They gathered nearly 100,000 signatures on Tyler petitions, brought 2,000 demonstrators to New Orleans and built support in cities across the U.S. and in almost a dozen countries around the world. Scenes from Free Tyler demonstrations in Canada and Norway are inspiring examples of the strength of proletarian internationalism.

Contrasting these revolutionary tactics with the dead-end program of



The Tyler case has been taken to the people.

the reformists, the film exposes the splitters and wreckers in the Tyler defense movement. It shows how the PDC and the majority of the forces in the defense movement rejected the attempts by Trotskyites and Walter Collins to derail the Tyler movement into reliance on the state. Collins is a well-known traitor to the Afro-American people's struggle.

Finally, the film is a lesson in bringing communist education to the workers and minorities. It shows October League cadres and revolutionary workers leafleting, taking part in plant gate discussions, selling *The Call* and engaging in other forms of agitation and propaganda. In a stirring speech supporting Tyler, Odis Hyde, a leading member of the October League and veteran Black communist, movingly describes the historic oppression of Afro-American people. Hyde calls for an attack on "the citadels that rule this country" in order to end once and for all the attacks on Gary Tyler and millions like him.

From The Call—May 30, 1977

Interview with Gary Tyler, part 1

The United States Supreme Court in a May 16 decision refused to hear the appeal of Gary Tyler, the 18-year-old Black frame-up victim from Louisiana.

Despite the many blatant aspects of the frame-up which have been brought out in the light of day, the high court simply refused to hear the case. Like every other aspect of the Tyler struggle to date, the decision only served to emphasize the racist nature of the court system and the capitalists' determination to keep Black fighters like Tyler behind bars.

Shortly before the decision was announced, *The Call* interviewed Gary Tyler in the Angola Penitentiary where he is serving a sentence of life imprisonment for the death of a white youth in a Klan attack on a school bus. Tyler points out that the courts can certainly not be relied upon for justice. He calls on all his supporters to intensify their efforts to win freedom for him and all political prisoners.

We heard you were put on death row, then in the hole on maximum security. What's your status now?

Well, I was on death row, but last week they put me in CCR—lockdown. I got three write-ups relating to work because I wouldn't do their work.

What kind of work did they have you doing?

They have you digging trenches, ditches, or out in the field. That's all they have us doing out there. But I'm not working, I'm in isolation. They

put me in the 'hole' because they said I'd be "dangerous" to the other inmates here in the penitentiary...

You could say the man is trying to bring us all under his control. In order for me to get out of the 'hole' and go back to general population, I got to get out and dig ditches for him. That's how it is.

But when the cotton season comes, I ain't picking no cotton. I ain't cutting no cane. I ain't picking no corn. I ain't going to do none of that, because I am not a slave!

I see they're trying to bring in modern slavery. Like Jimmy Carter says, he's going to create jobs for the people. This man [the warden, ed.] has the same idea—he wants everybody to work.

If a man got one arm, he's going to work. If a man got one leg, he's going to work. Everybody in this penitentiary is going to work. And if they don't want to work, the guards are going to lock them down in the hole, starve them to death if necessary, to get them out of their cells.

What do you mean "starving the prisoners?"

See, if the prisoners don't want to work, food is going to be scarce. And they say to you, "Look here, if you was out there working, you'd get fed better."

They're out there driving you all day. And if you stop working, you're going to get a write-up, and you go into the lockdown.

So what do you call that? That's slavery! It's just like we were back in slavery. When the slave refused to work, they'd beat him and lock him down, and starve him...

They want us to make a profit for them. That's why I say I ain't going to get out there and work for them. They can lock me down. No matter how hard they make things for me, I'm not a slave!

I'm being held here illegally. I've been resentenced unconstitutionally. And they want to justify their holding an innocent man here in the penitentiary! Yeah, I'm tired of this place. Yeah, it's hard. But I ain't going to let them get to me. I ain't going to let them get to me!

What's your legal situation?

I talked to my lawyer. He says sometime in June we should be hearing something from the Supreme Court. He's asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review my case.

What do you think about the Supreme Court?

Well, I know we're dealing with the same people, the same capitalist system. Some people tell me the U.S. Supreme Court is not like the South. But they're working under the same roof. They have the same ideas.

So I don't really know what's going to happen. If they don't grant me a new trial, or whatever, my hopes weren't high to begin with. I never put no faith in the courts because I'm not a legalist.

Even if they do grant me a new trial, it would still be crooked justice. Because if justice existed, I would have been free a long time ago, two years ago, when I got tried for this charge. So any justice they render is crooked justice.

Some reformists say that we should rely on the courts, rather than on the people, to free political prisoners like yourself. What do you say to that?

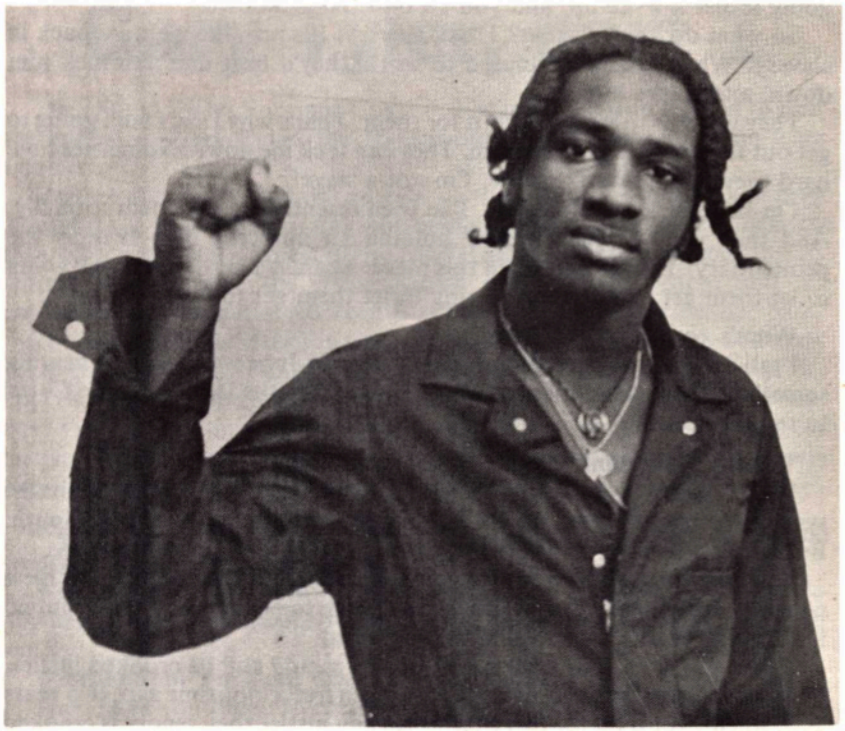
No, let it go all the way. You're out against it all. See, even if they give you a little moving space, they're only giving something they should have given you a long time ago. So, don't back off and say, "Hey, their conscience is getting to them." No, not that!

Look here! They're giving us a little fighting room. You don't thank them for that. You don't thank them at all!

What do you think about having another demonstration like the July 24th march last year in New Orleans, only this time, a national demonstration?

The last demonstration we had opened many people's eyes. I'm hoping that the next one will open thousands more eyes. We need this—a mass, militant demonstration.

Let the man know, they're going to be out there, that they'll shout, and let him know that they've had enough of this wrong-doing. They should let him know that if justice, as they call it, does exist within this capitalist system—and it don't—then they should prove it by freeing everyone that they framed and put in the penitentiary.



Gary Tyler in Angola Penitentiary, Spring of '77.

That would mean emptying the jails.

I know!

You know, people from your home town of Destrehan came to a rally in New Orleans last February to support your case and oppose police brutality.

That's good. People around Destrehan, around the parish of St. Charles, we need a whole lot of them to get involved in this. Let them know that the system they're living in isn't hitting on nothing, that we should overthrow this capitalist system. Organizations that are fighting against this capitalist system should pass out literature there and let them know what the system is doing.

May Day is coming up, the international working class holiday where the people express their determination to overthrow capitalism and end all oppression. Do you have anything you want to say to the people on May Day?

Send my solidarity to all the people. Let them know that I'm in good health and that I'm pleased to know that they're still out there. I will not give up! And I hope that they will continue to struggle for my freedom and for the freedom of all the political prisoners around the world!

From The Call—June 13, 1977

Interview with Gary Tyler, part 2

Two weeks ago, a *Call* reporter visited Gary Tyler, the 18-year-old Black frame-up victim, in Louisiana's infamous Angola Penitentiary. This was the second interview recently conducted and was the first time that Tyler had an opportunity to speak to the people since the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal for a new trial.

In this interview, Gary Tyler strongly puts forward his view that the masses of people must rise up and overthrow the imperialist system which stands behind his frame-up and the plight of all working and oppressed people. He urges his supporters not to believe in the courts of "democracy," which "applies only for the rich." Instead, Tyler states, the people "must declare war" on the system.

Were you surprised by the Supreme Court decision?

The Supreme Court decision was no surprise to me because I don't believe in them, and I don't underestimate them. They cannot render justice to a man at all—not if the man is fighting against them.

The way I look at it, they're all in the same clique. I know the man I face in the district court and the man I face in the Louisiana Supreme Court—well, I'm facing him in the U.S. Supreme Court, too. They're all the same.

What happens now in terms of the legal fight?

I'm going back to the courts on a habeas corpus. I'm going on account of my first lawyer sold me out and didn't really represent me.

I'm not gonna be quiet. If I go back to court, I'm going to speak and let them know that they can't misuse me. They got to look at me as a man!

Only the people can free me. And the courts know this. They're trying everything they can to get me to do some time out of this charge. But they know in a matter of time, the people are going to get tired of this. They're going to get tired of the injustice that has been committed against the working class, the Blacks, the Puerto Ricans, the Indians—all minority groups. The people is going to unite and they're going to put a stop to it all.

Can you tell us something about the demonstration outside the prison on May Day? We heard that Kalamu ya Salaam (Chairman of the People's Defense Coalition to Free Gary Tyler, ed.) got in to see you. Was there a response from the prisoners?

Was there a response! Everyone here in this penitentiary, all the inmates, knew about it. The guards had locked every last one of the convicts down. This whole building was clear. When I walked out of here to go see Kalamu in the death row visiting room, this whole building was quiet except for the prisoners who were speaking to me as I walked by. The guards were all shook up. They had 10 to 15 guards with me walking to see Kalamu.

And the prisoners felt beautiful. They all said how beautiful it was to see the people demonstrating out there. The brothers on D tier, the militants on D tier, they told me what a beautiful move it was.

See, now the man knows he can't run this place like he wants to run it. He can't mess over me like he wants to mess over me. Because he knows now that my case has strong support from the people.

Have you heard about the film *Gary Tyler Must Be Free,* produced by October Films?

Yeah, what I read about the film is that the film is supposed to educate people. What they're showing is how last July 24, thousands of people got together and united. It showed the man that they were determined, that they was out there to be seen and be heard. They was fighting for self-determination. And they was out there July 24 to show that I have been recognized by the people—not because my case is unique—no, they was out there to show the man that they was fighting for all political prisoners.

As you know, when the man sees a whole lot of people, he started counting heads...and he starts thinking twice.

Not that he can change his nature, no. The man is *possessed* with capitalism. He ain't nothing but a dog and animal. He does not believe in humanity. The only thing he believes in is imperialism—going to other countries and exploiting other people. That's what he believes in.

That's why the people who are out there fighting for my freedom cannot be legalists. They can't believe in the courts or in "democracy." Democracy applies only for the rich, the high class. It doesn't apply for the poor or the minorities or the working class.

That's why we got to declare war. We got to declare war on the rich, the ones that got it all. We got to declare war on the bourgeoisie!

What do you think about those who say that the Gary Tyler defense movement should rely on the courts, who say that "peaceful" change through the system is possible?

As you know, in order to have a transition, you need a revolution. You cannot make a peaceful transition. Look at Russia and China. They didn't win their independence non-violently. To make a transition, they fought violently. You cannot win socialism by peaceful transition.

Hey, that's what the rich hire their puppets for—to teach the people non-violence. They don't want a rebellion out there in society because I don't believe they can handle it.

The only way to win freedom is out of the barrel of a gun. You cannot fight a revolution without violence. Nowhere in history has it showed that there was a peaceful transition. Nowhere!

I know you're aware of the support for your case in this country. But do you also know that people around the world have supported your struggle, have signed petitions and held demonstrations?

Yeah, I've been aware. That's why I'm doing a whole lot of studying. Because I know I'm going to have to participate in the struggle that is waiting out there. I'm not seeking my freedom to gain it and go my way. I owe the people something, because they are taking their precious time to show me that they really care, that they care about what is happening to me.

So, I'm going to get out there and show my deep appreciation. Let the people know that if they're relying on me to help unite the people, I'm willing. If I can help the struggle, influence the people, the masses of people, then they have my time. I am ready to participate.

Literature from the CPML

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